

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Congress of Vienna. It is a thrilling story of the long conflict between the unbending representative of the old order and the Corsican adventurer with his savage outbursts of temper and his shabby tricks. To read this book is to understand why Wellington decked that his vanquished foe was not even a gentleman. Consalvi wrote his Memoirs during his exile at Rheims in 1812. He was unable to consult his papers and correspondence ; but his misfortune is our advantage, for the narrative based on his unaided memory, gains in freshness and force. The work, which fills two- volumes, consists of three parts—Memoirs of my Life, Memoirs of my Ministry, and three massive monographs on the Conckve of 1799, the Concordat of 1801, and Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise in 1810. There is some repetition, but each item contains material which the others lack.

The most dramatic parts of the work are the descriptions of the making of the Concordat and of the author's refusal to recognise the Emperor's second marriage. The news that the First Consul desired to re-establish the Church in France filled Pius VI with such delight that to the end of his life he kept a warm place in his heart for the ruler who was to treat him so outrageously. Consalvi, who was sent to Paris to negotiate, had no illusions, and his record of the agitating discussions fills the reader with disgust. Knowing exactly how far the Pope was prepared to go, he was ready for concessions on minor points but unyielding on matters of principle. When agreement was reached at last and the signature was about to take place, the Cardinal was horrified to discover that a different document had been secretly substituted for the draft and that it contained provisions which he had repeatedly declined.

Joseph Bonaparte, who represented his brother, knew nothing about it. When Consalvi firmly refused to sign he was exposed to the full blast of the Dictator's wrath. He cat up all night with his colleagues in an effort to find a compromise, and the Concordat was finally signed on July 15, 1801. Though the First Consul had been in a feverish hurry to proclaim die reconciliation with the Church, the publication was held back for a year and the Concordat was then accompanied by the uniktoral Organic Articles, " the fatal addition which destroyed it at birth." The greatest of historic men, as Acton called him, could never pky fair.

Consalvi bore the burden of the Papacy during the long absence of Pius VII for the Coronation of the Emperor. No